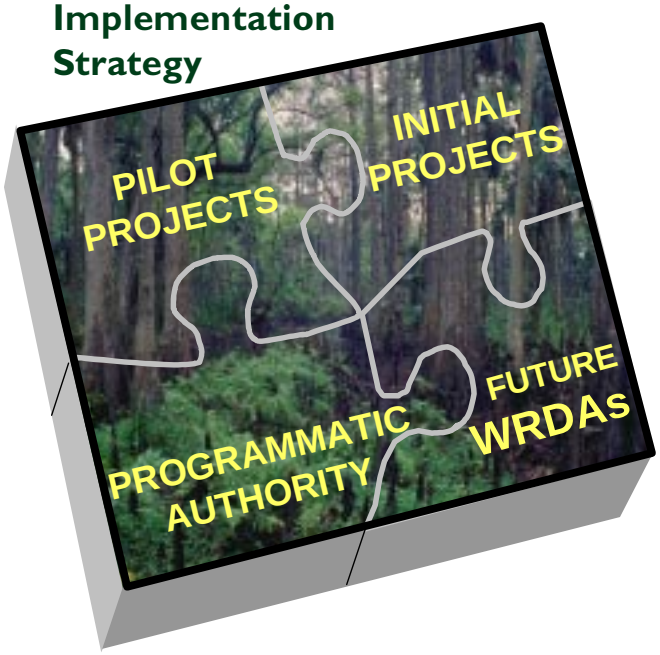
Implementation of the Plan Recognizes Ecosystem Restoration as the Overarching Objective.

The ultimate success of the Comprehensive Plan will be a reflection of its implementation over more than 20 years. Simply stated, the hard work lies ahead in terms of restoring this important ecosystem. Successful implementation will require a well-coordinated strategy that, like the Plan itself, recognizes that first and foremost, ecosystem restoration is the overarching objective. This objective is the principal driving force behind the sequence and pace at which specific project features are undertaken.

This Plan will begin to reverse, in a relatively short time, the pattern of ecological degradation that has been occurring in the natural system for many decades. If we start now, the natural wetlands system of south Florida will be healthier by the year 2010.

Implementation Strategy



The Restoration Effort Begins with Authorization in Water Resources Development Act of 2000

Through a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000, the Administration will ask Congress to authorize an initial $1.2 billion package of projects that will begin implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The initial authorization request will include 1) six pilot projects, 2) ten specific project features, and 3) a programmatic authority through which smaller projects can be more quickly implemented. Authorization for the remaining features of the Plan will be requested in subsequent Water Resources Development Act proposals beginning in 2002.

Pilot projects will address technical uncertainties. Prior to full-scale implementation, six pilot projects, costing about $97 million, will be built to address uncertainties with some of the features in the Comprehensive Plan. These projects include aquifer storage and recovery in each geographic region that the technology is proposed; in-ground reservoir technology in the lake belt region of Miami-Dade County; levee seepage management technology adjacent to Everglades National Park; and advanced wastewater treatment technology to determine the feasibility of using reuse water for ecological restoration.

Initial set of construction features will provide immediate system-wide water quality and flow distribution benefits and use already purchased land. Ten projects and the adaptive assessment program, totaling $1.1 billion, are recommended for initial authorization. These projects were selected because they can provide system-wide water quality and flow distribution benefits to the ecosystem as well as opportunities to integrate these features with other ongoing federal and state restoration programs. For example, if part of the initial authorization, modifications to Tamiami

Trail to improve flow distribution could be accomplished more quickly under the ongoing Modified Water Deliveries Project. In addition, the South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Department of the Interior have already purchased lands, such as the Talisman lands, for a number of Plan components. Authorization of projects that use lands already purchased will ensure that these lands are utilized for restoration as soon as possible.

Programmatic authority will expedite implementation. An authorization will be sought similar to the authorization received in 1996 for Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Projects (Critical Projects). These projects would "produce independent, immediate, and substantial restoration, preservation and protection benefits," and expedite some components of the Plan. The programmatic authority would be limited to those individual components of the Comprehensive Plan that have a total project cost of $70 million or less, with a maximum federal share of $35 million per project. A total of 27 components of the Plan, with a total combined federal and non-federal cost of $490 million, could be implemented in an efficient and expedited manner. Components such as the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge internal canal structures, the Lake Okeechobee watershed water quality treatment facilities, and the Florida Keys Tidal Restoration Project could be accomplished under this programmatic authority.

The remainder of the Plan's features to be included in future Water Resources Development Acts. Congress will be asked to authorize the remaining components of the Comprehensive Plan as more detailed planning is completed. At a cost of approximately $6.2 billion, the 26 remaining features will undergo additional studies and analysis before authorization is sought from Congress. Many of these project components are dependent on the results of the proposed pilot projects such as aquifer storage and recovery features and the in-ground reservoirs in Miami-Dade County. Based on the implementation schedule, project reports will be submitted to Congress periodically through the year 2014.

Congressional Authorization Not Needed for Some Components

Not all components of the Comprehensive Plan require additional authorization. The three recommended feasibility studies (Florida Bay and Florida Keys, Southwest Florida and the Comprehensive Integrated Water Quality Plan) will be conducted under the authority of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 that allows for the continuation of studies and analyses that are necessary to further the Comprehensive Plan. Some components of the Plan will be constructed or implemented under existing State processes. Operational changes associated with these features do not require action by Congress. For example, changes to the state's Holey Land Wildlife Management Area operational plan fall under this category.

Implementation of the Plan provides flexibility to adapt to new information. No plan can anticipate exactly how a complex ecosystem will respond during restoration efforts. For example, the remaining Everglades are only one-half as large as their original size, and current boundaries often do not follow natural ground elevations or habitat patterns. For these and many other reasons, the ways in which this ecosystem will respond to the recovery of more natural water patterns could include some unforeseen outcomes. The Comprehensive Plan anticipates such outcomes. The Plan is designed to allow project modifications that take advantage of what is learned from system responses, both expected and unexpected. Called adaptive assessment, and using a well-focused regional monitoring program, this approach will allow us to maximize environmental benefits while ensuring that restoration dollars are used wisely. The monitoring program measures how well each component of the plan accomplishes its objectives, and, this, in turn, sets up opportunities for refinement of succeeding components. Independent scientific review is an integral part of this process.

Pilot Projects

Project	Cost
Lake Okeechobee Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)	$19,000,000
Caloosahatchee River (C-43) Basin ASR	$6,000,000
Site 1 Impoundment and ASR	$9,000,000
Lake Belt In-Ground Reservoir Technology	$23,000,000
L-31N Seepage Management	$10,000,000
Wastewater Reuse Technology	$30,000,000
TOTAL	$97,000,000

Project Implementation Reports bridge the gap between the Comprehensive Plan and detailed design. To continue project implementation, more technical information is needed. Additional plan formulation and engineering and design will be required. Additional analysis of the impacts of the various projects on the environment, flood protection, water quality, economics and real estate will be required as will supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents. Evaluation of component contributions to Comprehensive Plan performance will also provide more information toward the overall process and provide opportunities for the overall refinement or modification to the Plan as needed. The results of these efforts will be documented in a series of Project Implementation Reports. These Project Implementation Reports are designed to bridge the gap between the conceptual level of the Comprehensive Plan and the detailed design necessary to proceed with construction.

(For more information, please refer to Section 10, Implementation Plan, in the final report.)

Projects for Initial Authorization

C-44 Basin Storage Reservoir	$112,562,000
Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoirs - Phase 1	$233,408,000
Site 1 Impoundment	$38,535,000
Water Conservation Areas 3A /3B Levee Seepage Management	$100,335,000
C-11 Impoundment & Stormwater Treatment Area	$124,837,000
C-9 Impoundment and Stormwater Treatment Area	$89,146,000
Taylor Creek / Nubbin Slough Storage and Treatment Area	$104,027,000
Raise and Bridge East Portion of Tamiami Trail and Fill Miami Canal within WCA 3	$26,946,000
North New River Improvements	$77,087,000
C-111 N Spreader Canal	$94,035,000
Adaptive Assessment and Monitoring Program	$100,000,000
TOTAL	**$1,100,918,000**